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POEMS

WRITTEN IN BARRACKS

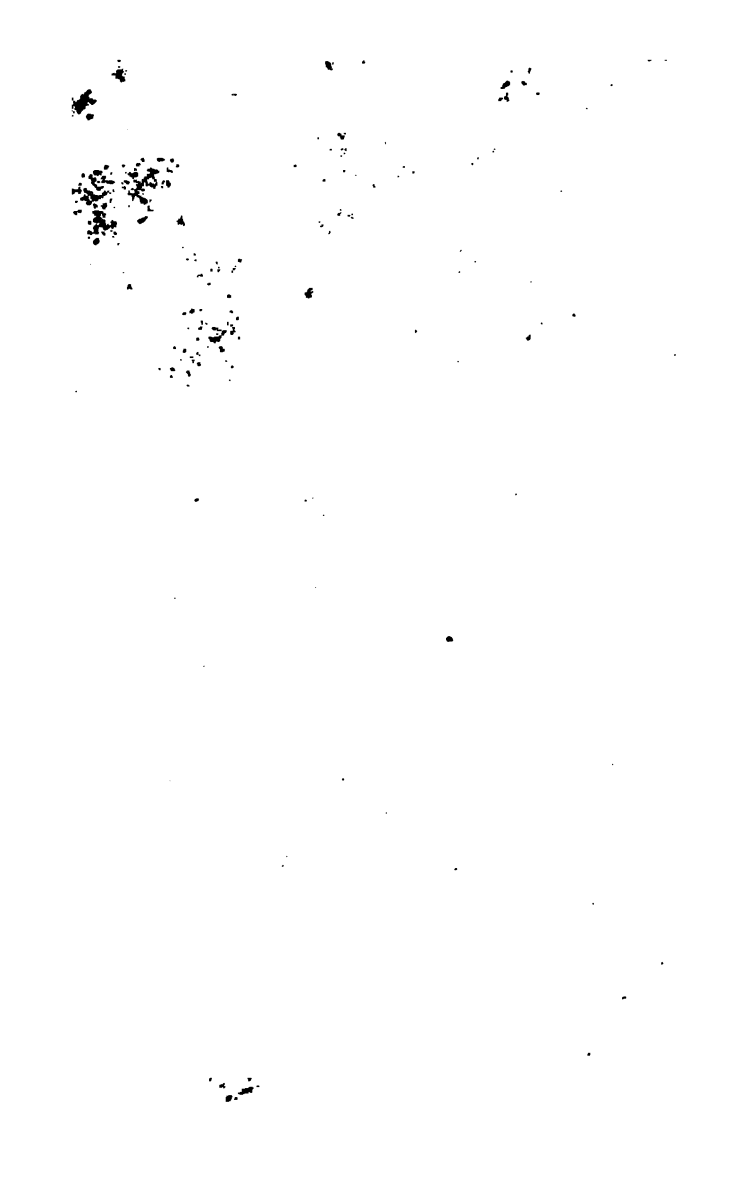


BY

ALEXANDER HUME BUTLER



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POEMS

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AND PARLIAMENT STREET

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ALEXANDER HUME BUTLER



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CONTENTS.



	PAGE
<i>The White Violet</i>	1
<i>The Swallow</i>	2
<i>The Water Lily</i>	3
<i>The Village Churchyard</i>	4
<i>The Redbreast</i>	6
<i>A Song of Sorrow</i>	7
<i>The Village Choir</i>	8
<i>Thames</i>	10
<i>An Excuse</i>	11
<i>Hope</i>	11
<i>Kepler's Ode</i>	12
<i>Boating Song</i>	14
<i>Autumn Leaves</i>	15
<i>The Convolvulus</i>	17
<i>On the Shore</i>	18
<i>To a Goldfinch</i>	19
<i>A Bridal Song</i>	20
<i>The Felon's Cemetery</i>	21
<i>Morning</i>	23
<i>The Hostage</i>	24
<i>Yellow Leaves</i>	25
<i>To my Mother on her Fiftieth Birthday</i>	25
<i>The Primrose</i>	27
<i>The Soldier's Funeral</i>	28
<i>The Vesper Hour</i>	29



6000830700

	PAGE
<i>Sappho's Last Song</i>	69
<i>A Withered Flower</i>	70
<i>'Gay'</i>	71
<i>Clouds</i>	72
<i>Esther May</i>	73
<i>Light and Shade</i>	73
<i>Caroline</i>	74
<i>Dying for Love</i>	75
<i>The Chrysalis</i>	75
<i>Lines on Leaving Aspley Guise</i>	78
<i>Wild Flowers</i>	79
<i>Christmas Music</i>	80
<i>Two 'Ifs'</i>	82
<i>The March of the Pucelle</i>	84
<i>Prayer Time</i>	86
<i>Vanquished</i>	87
<i>The Lantern Bearer</i>	88

NOTE.—*Some of the Poems in this Volume have been published in 'The Quiver,' 'Belgravia,' 'Chambers's Journal,' and other serials.*

POEMS

The White Violet.

Why with such strange control
Dost thou affect my soul ?
Behold I kneel
Amid the scene,
And almost feel
His touch serene,
Whose voice that loves to teach
Through things terrene
Is speaking in thy speech.

Ah ! if this tainted earth
Can to such things give birth,
Oh say ! Oh say !

How wondrous fair
Those far-away
Sky islands where,
Fanned by each angel wing,
The raptured air
Breathes one eternal spring ?

THE SWALLOW.

Oh ! that I were a swallow,
With arrowy wing unfurled,
My only care to follow
The summer round the world ;

To cool within the river
The fever of my breast,
Or cling where the willows quiver
Till they rocked my heart to rest ;

To watch by that violet's bower,
That with the twilight dies,
And bear the soul of the flower
To its home in the purple skies.

But when the storm came wailing
Down from the pine-clad height,
And I found my bright wings failing
In the frosty dews of night—

Drop a plume for the rose's sorrow,
Kiss the lily mouth to mouth,
Bid the cruel winds good morrow,
And away for the balmy south.

Oh ! happy, happy swallow !
These joys to thee belong ;
But I can only follow
The summer in my song !

THE WATER LILY.

It is night upon the river,
And the river's lily bride,
Floating where the willows quiver,
Sleeps upon the silent tide.
Lily, lily, stainless maiden,
Oh, that I could sleep as thou,
With no other burden laden
Than the moonbeam on my brow !

Round thy bed the river lingers,
And each feature seems to trace,
Moving, like a blind man's fingers,
O'er the beauties of thy face.
Lily, lily, radiant flower,
I can hear his stolen kiss ;
Oh ! to share thy fate an hour—
With thee surely love is bliss.

The Water Lily.

But, oh, hark ! the winds are rising !
 See, they sweep the swollen streams,
 And the lovely flowers surprising,
 Scatter death upon their dreams.
 Lily, lily, in thy sorrow,
 Still I envy half thy fate ;
 Thou wilt never know the morrow
 That beholds thee desolate.

THE VILLAGE CHURCHYARD.

In the churchyard this peaceful Sabbath ev'ning,
 While the low notes of organ-swell are shed,
 Like a sweet lullaby of hushful meaning
 Around the mossy cradles of the dead ;
 Reclining where the leafy summer fountains
 Rustle in concert with the soft wind's sigh,
 I watch the sun-glow fading on the mountains,
 Whose purpling summits slumber in the sky.

Silently tread the gray-cloaked shadows, stealing
 Into the precincts of the holy ground ;
 Silently weeps the gentle mourner, kneeling
 Beside affection's consecrated mound :
 Only the hymn-strains from the old church portals
 In faint and fitful music hover near,
 As if the songs of the far-off immortals
 Had wandered in melodious murmurs here.

The dim light from the painted windows shining,
 The vesper star pale through the ev'ning dews,
 The sweetbriar's whisp'ring breath around me twining,
 All tempt the pensive measure of the Muse ;

Yet though her closes may be soft and holy,
Her strain accordant with the hour serene,
Her cadence chastened and her burden lowly,
She seems but an intruder on the scene.

All early scattered, round my feet are lying
Pale flowers that by stress of climate died ;
And some whose angels found for them in dying
The sweet companionship their lives denied ;
And little lives of innocence and duty
Are here, that fearless to their slumber came ;
And here too lies the erring child of beauty,
And sleeps away the stain upon her name.

Here lies the bud with not a leaf expanded,
The parent branches bowed Thy Will be Done,
And closed its eyes and laid it down white-handed
From the red battle with the victory won ;
And he lies here whose brow had learnt to brighten
While the swift rapture flashed upon his pen ;
Whose ardent breast already learnt to lighten
With dreams of fame and the acclaim of men.

He does not heed them now : the weeping willow
Bends with a courtly sorrow o'er his head ;—
His mother planted it above his pillow
To mark her poet-boy among the dead ;
His muse she still holds sacred as none other,
Nor ever tires his genius to rehearse ;
Ah ! fame is short and sleep is sweet, my brother—
I envy while I strew thy fun'ral verse.

But how the Master's loveliest flowers are withered,
While their more garish kindred watch them fade,
And how the sweet strings in His lyre are shivered
By fiercer chords, their rites in silence paid ;

The Village Churchyard.

And how the various winds of passion travel
O'er souls of beauty and obscure their worth,
And how the viewless fingers strangely ravel
The bright threads He has woven round the earth !

Surely when here we sleep, our journey ended,
His angels' hands shall yet regain the clue
Of these our tangled lives, and, rightly blended,
In heavenly looms their pattern weave anew ;
At least we know Him for a God of Power,
Who will not let the evil mar His good ;
So I, serene, can wait life's parting hour,
Nor view with dread this solemn neighbourhood.

THE REDBREAST.

Sweet minstrel of the waning year,
That com'st in warrior colours drest,
As tho' the winter winds would fear
Thy tiny breast—
To me thy flute-like strain is dear,
Above the rest.

When, lately, ev'ry tuneful throat
Was blithe and busy all day long,
Thou hidd'st, unheeded and remote
From the gay throng,
Thy russet wing, and the soft note
Of thy low song.

But now the sougning woods are bare,
And the sweet wild-flowers' eyes are dim,
While the brook searches in despair
His frozen rim ;
Rings out upon the wintry air
Thy carol hymn.

I would not spare the feathered crew
That warble to the courted spring,
And sport, the merry summer through,
On glancing wing,
Nor those that high in ether-blue
Aspire to sing :

Yet most I love thee, who alone—
Like the fond heart that changes not,
But, when life's sunshine hours are flown,
Still shares our lot—
Canst make a summer of thine own
In any spot.

A SONG OF SORROW.

Oh ! tell me the name of the city
Where friendship and love are sincere ;
Oh ! tell me, ye angels of pity,
But bid me not look for them here.

Oh ! speak of some haven less dreary,
Some land of a happier birth,
For my desolate spirit is weary
Of walking the desolate earth.

For the thorns in the way they are many,
And the flow'rs they never remain,
And the hours of sunshine, if any,
Are followed full soon by the rain.

And hope is a fraud on the morrow,
And life but a trick of the breath,
And love is the vassal of sorrow,
And beauty the bondmaid of death.

THE VILLAGE CHOIR.

The village choir I celebrate,
 Perhaps in enthusiast song,
 Yet such a theme to underrate
 Would be as grave a wrong ;
 So, Fancy, shake thy silver bells,
 Till in their jangling swells
 The muse herself intoxicate,
 Elate,
 Expire
 With rapture enervate
 Dissolved upon the lyre.

Oh, holy Music ! theme sublime !
 While rapt in thy inspiring chime,
 Beyond this drear
 Dark atmosphere
 A moment's space I climb ;—
 I stand within an olden fane,
 I see life's opening scenes again,
 Old sounds are on me stealing :
 I hear the organ pealing,
 I hear the old men singing,
 The children's voices ringing ;
 Heads of snow
 Bowed down so low,
 Infant eyes
 That look so wise,
 As though, in sooth,
 Old age and youth
 Felt their equality before the skies.

Lifted on the hymnal line,
My ravished being rides
O'er music's tuneful tides
In ecstasy divine ;
And with the organ's hundred throats,
And with the children's silver notes,
Again I mingle mine.

Slow and holy, slow and holy,
Slow and holy, low and sweet ;
Slower, slower still, and lower,
The length'ning chords repeat,
Till sound and silence meet
And die away,
Die away

Beneath Jehovah's feet ;
Then with a sudden burst,
As though the earth, athirst,
Would at one draught of melody drain all the heavens dry—
Our rage no more dissembling,
The temple ceiling trembling—
The chorussed Hallelujahs rejubilate the sky.

So, on the Sabbath day,
Let the loud organ play,
Where falls,
On gray
And ancient walls,
The painted window's ray.

So let the cottage throng
Again, at ev'ning dim,
Renew the supplicating song
Or sweet thanksgiving hymn.

And so to these and all who raise
The theme of their Great Maker's praise,

The Village Choir.

Thy lays, my lyre, be given ;
 And may my fingers often
 Thy holiest chords prolong,
 In measures framed to soften
 The heart steeped in my song,
 And lift it nearer Heaven.

THAMES.

Thames, infant Thames,
 Rippling, flowing
 Water-white,
 Where the bright
 Young wilding gems
 Are blowing ;
 Babbling ever in unrest,
 While as o'er her darling's pillow
 Bends the mother, so the willow
 O'er thy breast.

Thames, maiden Thames,
 Glancing, shining
 Silver-blue ;
 While for you
 The liliated stems
 Are pining.
 Ah ! thou lovest best to play
 Slily with the wanton swallow,
 While he whispers thee to follow
 Him away.

Thames, matron Thames,
 That ebbest back
 From the sea ;
 Oh ! in thee
 There are emblems
 Of life's track :

We, too, would, like thee, regain,
If we might, our greener hours ;
We, too, mourn our vanished flowers,
But in vain.

AN EXCUSE.

You ask for the song that I fain would deny,
Yet still my poor lyre at thy bidding must be,
For half of her music is vowed to the sky,
And the rest she divides between sorrow and thee.

I fain would deny thee, lest, rousing the muse,
With her I awaken her sister of pain ;
For it matters not what be the theme that I choose—
Whenever I sing there is grief in the strain.

Yet a light lay would ill suit a bosom like thine—
Deep spirits delight in a mournfuller close ;
So the nightingale's note shall be tutor to mine,
For she ever sings sadly when courting the rose.

HOPE.

A maiden sat, with head depressed,
Her meek hands folded on her breast,
And on her golden hair
The shade of Eden's vanished rest—
For sin had entered there.

An Angel from the Lord of Grace
Approached, and whispered that the race
Of man should be forgiven ;
The maiden lifted up her face,
And Hope changed eyes with Heaven.

KEPLER'S ODE.

O Thou, who mad'st the soul a sun,
 Round which high thoughts like planets run,
 All brightening with divinity,
 Be Thine this victor-hymn of battle won ;
 For if from yonder starry lore
 Wonders unrevealed before
 Are translated to the ages,
 And the fettered truth set free,
 'Twas Thy hand that turned the pages,
 And interpreted to me
 The archives of infinity.

The ended labour deign to bless—
 Vain is Science's long pursuit,
 Vain the students' pains, unless
 Thou consecrate their fruit.

For ye whom meaner toils engage,
 Smile not upon my sacred rage,
 But hear how one of mortal mould,
 Through yon star-battalions breaking,
 Shattering their bolts of gold,
 Scaled their flaming walls sublime ;
 War upon their squadrons making,
 Till leaguered from the camps of time,
 Spheres beyond the solar night
 Stooped to surrender
 Secrets long locked in light,
 Long veiled in splendour :

Thwart by the thralls of clay,
The clue of wisdom still I sought
By study stern and long ;
In the silent halls of thought,
Singing an unworded song ;
Toiling on and tiring never,
Higher, higher, day by day,
Till the spirit's rapt endeavour
Bore the grand prize away.

Hark ! methinks on fiery wing
Yon orbs of glory sing !
Serene they ride,
In equal flight ;
Their wheels divide
The deeps of night,
But there is music on the heavenly hill :
In empyrean
Halls sublime,
Sounds thy pean,
Child of time !
Along the terrace of the sky
The stars proclaim thy victory,
And the proud celebration of thy triumph fulfil.

Oh ! who would shun the holy strife,
Content with an ignoble life,
When every radiating spark
Of light beyond the dark,
While urging on its brilliant race,
Still beckons him with shining face
Into its own infinity ?
At least, not thou, my soul,
While circling round thee roll
High thoughts, like planets round their sun,
On Science's farthest orbit spun,
And brightening with divinity.

BOATING SONG.

I.

Over the waters blue and deep,
Where the golden sun is glowing ;
Over the waters wide we sweep,
Where ripples of light are flowing ;
My bride and I, beneath the sky,
Alone where none may follow ;
Where none will note our little boat,
Except the silent swallow.

II.

Over the waters silver white,
Where the pale-browed moon is floating ;
Keeping pace, in her azure height,
To the measure of our boating.
While scarce we dip the thin oar tip
Where the eddies dance and quiver,
Speaking low of love, we go
Silently down the river.

III.

Over the waters morn and eve,
When summer winds are playing,
What fairy dreams of life we weave,
Nor think of Fate's gainsaying ;
But while we may, we scatter the spray
In many a snow-like feather :
So let us ride o'er life's rude tide
Alone, with our love, together.

AUTUMN LEAVES.

Gold-tinted in the Autumn sun, the Autumn leaves are
 glowing,
 Silently falling, one by one, while Autumn winds are
 blowing ;
 More beautiful than in their birth, as Christians are in
 dying,
 They softly rustle down to earth, while the forest boughs are
 sighing.

And yet 'tis sad to watch them go, those whisperers of the
 wood,
 That our own hearts had learnt to know and almost under-
 stood—
 To see them tremulously leap, as, driven by, they pass,
 Like gentle billows o'er the deep of the dark green Autumn
 grass.

A little while ago 'twas Spring, and we loitered by the
 way,
 Where the hawthorn bush was minist'ring to the glories of
 the May ;
 And now in the new-furrowed ridge the hawthorn flowers
 are sleeping,
 And hawthorn leaflets make a bridge where the canker-worm
 is creeping.

Some on the silent river drift, bound none of us know
 where ;
 Some in a hospitable rift hide from the frosty air ;

Al, sad the thought ! the wind that strews their withered
race together,
Late rocked them in the Summer dews, the pride of the
sunny weather.

And while the elm-tree's ambered store, chestnut and red-
brown beach,
Are writing thus the solemn lore their fading beauties teach,
Young children, winnowing the leaves, the fallen nuts are
seeking—
Spring leaves themselves, they little know what the Autumn
leaves are speaking !

They dream not of the dull heart-beat, and the soul-sky
overcast,
That follow memory's restless feet through the dead leaves
of the past ;
Nor how fond hope our toil employs, as we seek, and seek
in vain,
To winnow from our withered joys one that shall live again.

And yet, ye leaves, so brightly sere, ye leaves so fair in death,
Ye speak of something even here that dies not with our
breath ;
For though from yonder tow'rs forlorn the tempest hurl you
low,
That its fierce shafts were nobly borne your blazoned bosoms
show.

Thus may the tempest and the strife the spirit's light in-
crease,
Until the battle-hours of life shall all be hushed in peace ;
And then the sun that sees our fall shall be that Father's
eye,
Whose winds of heaven delight to call His children to the
sky.

THE CONVULVULUS.

Convolvulus, convolvulus,
 Why open'st thou so gay?
 Alas! thou canst not stay with us,
 Thy life is but a day.

Tho' soft and kind the early wind
 That kissed thy waking eye,
 Serene and deep shall be thy sleep
 When next it wanders by.

And the same sun that lit each gem
 Upon thy dewy brow,
 Shall dry away thy diadem
 And mock his morning vow.

Yet they have not the happiest lot
 That longest cling to life,
 But rather they who scarcely stay
 To prove its weary strife.

The little birds themselves shall sing
 A vesper hymn for thee,
 The twilight star's the only thing
 Thy closing eye shall see.

And rose winds sweet, with noiseless feet,
 Shall tend thy couch serene,
 While angels weave the shades of eve
 With threads of gold between.

Ah, better thus to pass away
 While summer scenes are by,
 Than linger out a late decay
 Beneath the wintry sky.

ON THE SHORE.

Lying where the waves are beating
 On the shore ;
 Where they kiss the earth in greeting
 Evermore ;
 Where as on a mother's breast,
 The white surf's pale cheek is prest,
 Weary of its long unrest,
 On the shore.

Lying where the waves are swelling
 To the shore ;
 Big with secrets they are telling
 Evermore ;
 Fain eaves-dropper could I play,
 Often wond'ring what they say,
 Busy whispering for aye
 To the shore.

Lying amid sand and shingle,
 On the shore,
 Gazing far off, where commingle
 Evermore,
 In huge embrace, sea and sky,
 Circled by infinity,
 Filled with awe and love, I lie,
 On the shore.

TO A GOLDFINCH.

(On seeing one performing tricks in a show.)

Sweet exile from thy native glade,
 Upon whose many-tinted wing,
 By Nature's cunning pencil laid,
 We see the light, we see the shade
 Of thine own woods in spring
 Al'ernately displayed,
 With the altered hues they wear
 When the boughs are waving bare,
 And sere or red
 Beneath the tread
 The leaves lie withering ;—

What ruthless hand did first explore
 The lattice of thy secret bower,
 Built for the mate that never more
 Shall warm for thee the feathery floor,
 Ere, at the twilight hour,
 She tempts thee to her door ?
 Ah ! now she sits with grieving throat,
 And thou—forgot thy forest note—
 Art playing tricks
 With straws and sticks,
 Within a despot's power.

Another might not feel thy wrong,
 But I—alas ! thy fate is mine—
 I, too, would lead a life of song,
 And, but that Fate's rude bonds are strong,
 Full oft the lyric line
 Fair Fancy should prolong

To a Goldfinch.

At times to fervent themes of love ;
 But to the Fount of song above
 More frequent raise
 The hymn of praise
 And symphony divine.

Yet though in toils ungenial prest,
 We at our tuneless labour groan,
 The song that's stifled in the breast,
 Nor to the scornful world confest,
 To One at least is known,
 And heard while unexpressed.
 To Him the silent is not mute,
 And thy still voice and my hushed lute
 May swell the hymn
 Of seraphim
 Around our Maker's throne.

A BRIDAL SONG.

'Tis the morn of our bridal, my sweetheart, my dove,
 And the lark carols loud in the ether above,
 But my heart singeth louder than he ;
 For the sun of my soul is the light of thine eyes,
 And brighter are they than the summer-lit skies,
 And dearer than summer to me.

Yet my song shall be short, for to lengthen the strain,
 Would only be sweeping again and again
 The one string of my passionate lute ;
 As the nightingale, sing he as long as he will,
 Must repeat the same note in his melody still,
 Or the throb of his bosom be mute.

This alone be my prayer, that whatever betide,
We may faithfully journey thro' life side by side,
 Our mutual frailties forgiven ;
Till we climb together, my sweetheart, my dove,
To the topmost round of the ladder of love,
 And the beautiful windows of Heaven.

THE FELON'S CEMETERY.

(In the Newgate burial passage.)

Here cemeteried from their kind apart,
 Where none may come to weep,
The outlawed tenants of the city's heart,
 Our felon children, sleep.

The prison bell tolled out their funeral call
 In cold and iron tone ;
The pavement of the corridor is all
 Their dark memorial stone.

Haply on some, when pondering their doom
 In yon adjoining cell,
The contemplation of their neighbouring tomb
 Smote as a ceaseless knell.

And these perchance recalled the mountain rill,
 Where once their feet roamed free,
And wished a grave upon the windy hill,
 Above the moaning sea.

While those reviewed some spot with violets strewn,
 Serene and far away,
Where on the ivy's silvered leaf the moon
 Expend her waning ray.

All to the limits of the narrow realm,
Swayed by the village spire,
Sentinelled by the venerable elm,
Must soon or late retire.

But there's the thought of some surviving face,
Some hand to plant a flower,
The loved lips' prayer, the consecrated place,
To smooth the parting hour.

While here the echo of the warder's tread,
The music of his key,
Alone approach the miserable dead—
Dead by the law's decree.

Or others, if they come, still gaze severe,
With hard unyielding eye ;
But pity draws from me the silent tear
And tribute of a sigh.

Ah ! it may be while Justice is but blind,
For all the world's attaint,
That here the resurrection trump shall find
The members of a saint ;

Of one to whom the immemorial rites
Of elegy belong—
O'er such a one perchance the muse recites
This meditative song :

And so while many weep where virtue lies,
While many mourn the brave,
Let one frail mortal humbly veil his eyes
Above the felon's grave.

MORNING.

From rounded hills and dimpling vales
 Night's shadowy shrouds unfold,
 And the lonely star of morning pales,
 And the mists are bathed in gold.

Soft zephyrs are breathing from the west,
 Over the rippling corn,
 And the ruby kiss of the sun is prest
 On the white brow of the morn.

The flowers shake off their dewy sleep,
 And their petaled eyes unclose
 With innocent looks on the calm blue deep
 That curtains their repose.

From nestling homes, all leaf-embowered,
 The birds pour matin songs,
 And fields and river-banks are showered
 With new-born insect throngs.

All things are glad at the wakening breath
 That heraldeth the day,
 When sleep, so nearly akin to death,
 Passeth upon its way :

The sweet foreshadowing of that waking,
 When under heavenly skies,
 While the morn of another life is breaking
 We shall open these darkened eyes.

THE HOSTAGE.

So, in her little house of blue,
 Dotted with nails of white,
 Set there, like silver stars, to charm
 Away the grave's dark night—

Our darling lies, her tiny hands
 Folded across her breast,
 As in mute testimony to
 The sweetness of her rest.

Beautiful is the dawning calm
 Upon the little brow !
 Thank God ! no gathering mists of sin
 Can ever cloud it now.

And see, her locks are tinged with gold—
 Perhaps her young life's sun
 Touched them in setting, as a sign
 Its journey was not done ;

That 'twas but sunk behind the hills
 Our vision may not climb,
 To shine, with an unclouded light,
 In heaven's holier clime.

Sweet, as a hostage we will keep
 Those rippled strands of hair,
 That we may claim our darling back,
 In the day that we meet her there.

YELLOW LEAVES.

The yellow leaves float on the river, Elise,
And strew the damp grass on its desolate strand ;
But here, while the winter winds shiver, Elise,
I gather those yellow leaves up in my hand.

The scent of the rose may be vaunted, Elise,
But one nosegay to me does all others eclipse ;
The wet leaves I press to my forehead, Elise,
Or lift to the touch of my feverish lips.

Enough in the spring will caress them, Elise,
For the beauty in which they embower the glade ;
Enough in the summer will bless them, Elise,
For the shelter that dwells in their sun-riven shade.

But they're mine when their summer friends leave them, Elise,
For when withered and sere by the tempest wind blown,
While the cold earth is spread to receive them, Elise,
Their fortune of sorrow resembles my own.

*TO MY MOTHER ON HER FIFTIETH BIRTH-
DAY.*

My Mother dear, is this indeed the day
That marks the fiftieth milestone of thy way ?
And can it be that those calm eyes have seen
So much of sorrow and are still serene ?
Well may the muse proclaim the day with song—
From thee derived, to thee my lays belong ;

For all the lore I boast was gleaned, I trow,
From that sweet lexicon—a mother's brow !
I would, O Time ! my weakling lyre awhile
Might from that brow thy withering touch beguile !
Thy threads of sorrow even now invade
Its sacred precincts with their silver braid,
Trailing gray shadows round her angel face,
Like moonlight falling in some holy place ;
Yet, changed to others still it seems to me
Through memory's vista as it used to be ;
Still are those eyes as bright, those lips as red,
As when they bent above my infant bed.
Sweet lips, I see them parted as in prayer,
And almost hear the ' Our Father ' there !
While once again upon my heart doth steal
That peace of childhood that I used to feel,
When in the gathering twilight calm and dim,
Half-veiled from earth they sang the vesper hymn.
But why invoke a retrospective strain ?
Not such, my Mother, had been thy refrain ;
Ah ! couldst thou take my pen and trace the line
Befitting best that radiant soul of thine,
Thou wouldst record how every closing year
Struck off some fetter of this fallen sphere,
And how thy spirit more of freedom found
As link by link the coil of life unwound !
Cease, then, my muse, nor idly stretch thy wing,
She lives a lovelier life than I can sing ;
She on the seraph height of rapture roves,
I wander pale among the muses' groves ;
She dedicates her every hour to God,
I dream of Heaven, but leave the road untrod.

THE PRIMROSE.

Sweet firstling flower of Flora's flock,
 Pretty, pretty primrose,
 How canst *thou* bear the wintry air
 And storm-winds shock,
 Primrose, little, little primrose.

The softest hour in Summer's train,
 Fairest, fairest primrose,
 Would seem too bleak for thy pale cheek,
 Pride of the lane,
 Primrose, little, little primrose.

The tall trees stand with trembling mien,
 Baby, baby primrose,
 While thy calm eye, fixed on the sky,
 Remains serene,
 Primrose, little, little primrose.

Who bade thee choose that mossy bed,
 Modest, modest primrose ;
 And made the dew of heav'n fall through
 Upon thy head,
 Primrose, little, little primrose ?

Dost thou refuse to answer me,
 Silent, silent primrose ?
 Ah, well, dear flower ! I know the Power
 That cherished thee,
 Primrose, little, little primrose.

Held in His hand the weak are strong,
Fragile, fragile primrose ;
Safe in His love thou look'st above :
So shall my song !
Primrose, little, little primrose.

THE SOLDIER'S FUNERAL.

Hark to the soldier's dirge !
Sounding low, sounding slow—
Sounding so that it may urge
The tear we should bestow ;
For he they bring along
Bore a brave heart and strong
To front his country's foe.

With arms reversed, they come
Two and two,
His comrades true,
Marching slow to the roll of the drum.

His country's flag is all
Of panoply or pall—
The soldier needs no more ;
The trophies o'er him laid
Are but the plume and blade
That late he proudly wore.

It is his last parade :
Let the muffled drums beat low,
Late he followed them in pride,
Now, with sad and measured stride,
His comrades rear
Him on his bier,
To the Dead March moving slow.

The churchyard gained, the rites are read,
The chaplain's prayer and due responses said,
Three volleys in the air his comrades fire,
Shoulder arms, form rank, and retire.

Quick march and away !
The drums go on before,
Muffled now no more,
And the merry fife has play.

Let another take the bed
With his knapsack at the head,
Short time is there here for sorrow.
He left a tidy kit,
His things are clean and fit
For the soldiers' auction to-morrow.

THE VESPER HOUR.

In the peaceful hour of eventide,
I walked by the winding river-side—

After the heat of the summer day,
Wooing the zephyrs' delightful play.

Their cooling fingers smoothed my brow,
Where a trace of their tenderness lingers now.

The waters rippled low and sweet,
Like the silver measures of fairy feet ;

And the songster of love, unwilling to rest,
Made melody in her leaf-bound nest.

The soft-eyed flower, the streamlet's bride,
Bent, her blue-deepening tints to hide ;

But the river grew amorous at the sight,
And kissed her to sleep in the shadows of night.

The star-flock came forth in their fleeces of gold,
And the shepherdess moon kept a watch o'er the fold.

Then hushed were the heaven-roofed aisles of air,
And I knew it was Nature's time of prayer ;

So I turned my face to the silent sky,
And pastured my soul on infinity—

Dreaming a poet's dream of love
And life in the angel land above ;

And lost to the world in the trancing power
Pervading each sense at the vesper hour.

THE CUCKOO.

I.

Thou foolish bird, why thus repeat
A note that is not sweet ?
The songs around so loud and free
All shame thy faint endeavour,
Then wherefore sit in yonder tree
Piping one note for ever ?

II.

Go, study thou some brilliant lay,
Suiting the long bright day ;
It is not well to waste the spring,
A mock to all thy brothers ;
I should be blithe to hear thee sing
As sweetly as the others.

III.

And yet, poor bird, small right have I
To read this homily ;
 A nobler spring of life was mine,
 And lessons far more ample ;
But though I chide a fault of thine,
 I followed thy example.

IV.

This moral to thy note belongs—
Our *lives* are cuckoo songs ;
 Howe'er we study to refrain,
 Each foible is repeated,
Until the links in folly's chain
 Too surely are completed.

THE WOODBINE.

Open those primrose lips, my woodbine sweet,
 For I am fain to steal their breath away ;
As erst in childhood when, on tiptoed feet,
 I drank the nectared odours of thy spray,
 Though little thinking that an after day
Would hold such unbought raptures dearer far
 Than honours waited for with long delay,
And won at last, as soldiers' ribbons are,
By dint of many a lifelong lasting scar—
Scars that are not less felt because imprest
Deep in the heart, instead of on the breast.
Open those primrose lips, my woodbine fair,
 Their perfume will recall life's early bliss,
When through my bedroom window draped with care,
Your whispers floated on the summer air,
 And woke me to my mother's morning kiss.

THE SILENT LOVER.

Not gaily as others to woo thee I come,
Nor prompt on my lip is the question of love ;
Where the river is deepest the ripple is dumb,
And the bird of least song is the turtle-dove.

Believe me, the heart should not lightly declare
A passion the angels might tremble to own ;
For the language of love and the language of pray'r
Are the holiest things that to mortals are known.

The lightning-charged cloud can dissemble its fire,
While the transient sunbeam to all glitters free ;
So the lightnings of passion lie hid in my lyre,
But they fly through my soul when I touch it for the

THE POET'S ELEGY.

Hushed are his lips, and yet they fill
A thousand hearts with music still ;
Cold are his hands, yet their repose
Is only music's lengthened close.
Nor silence to his tongue impute,
For, when the eloquent is mute,
Muteness itself is eloquent ;
It is the dam upon the river,
Whereon the waters press for ever,
By their own fulness pent.

Oh, singer of the silver throat,
What pulse of rapture urged thy note ?
What mystic power, what strange control,
Hadst thou to urge or rein the soul ?
We heard thee sweep the keys of life—
Our hearts grew ardent for the strife ;
We heard thee touch the chords of death,
And could have fain forborne our breath ;
We followed thee among the flowers—
Thenceforth their lives were linked with ours ;
Through thee we learnt from brook and bird
What our dull ears had never heard ;
And beauty fell where all was bare,
 As we pondered in the brain
 Many a proud but tender strain
Whose burden yet was prayer !

Was not his life from foible clear ?
Abate your censure, ye severe ;
His ears are cold, he cannot hear.
'Tis weak to make his memory bleed,
Whose mute lips no defence may plead ;
The grass is heavy on his head,
Go lightly by and spare the dead.
Whatever now our hearts deplore,
Be sure his own bewailed before ;
And think, as you reprove the stain,
A little on the sweet refrain ;
For all was mortal that was ill,
But what was pure is breathing still !
Retrace your steps, spare him a tear
Who wept so oft for others here ;
Pause kindly by his early bed,
Bend lightly over—bless the dead !

The dead ! methinks the word is wrong,
The one thing deathless here is song !

Look up, yon rays of starry fire
That quiver in the blue night sky
Are strings of the Eternal's lyre,
O'er which the angel fingers fly,
Linking, linking, ever linking
Chords that here are dying, sinking,
To the rhythm purer, higher,
Of the beatific quire,
Where the soul has her desire,
Singing in eternity.

There, when on earth his eyes fell dim,
The spirit singers lifted him
Who had already practised long
The strains they use above ;
For, ever woven in his song,
Were praise, and prayer, and love :—
Three strands of one bright string,
Whereon he never tired to play,
Hymning his Maker's praise alway,
While earthly damps depressed his wing.
Hark ! now though far away,
That theme we yet may hear him sing—
Oh ! sweetly, sweetly, sweetly, sing,
Beyond the thralls of clay.

UNCONSOLABLE.

Ask me not why my smile is flown,
Ask me not why my light is fled ;
Let me go on my way alone,
I and my dead.

I and my dead—you cannot take
Turns with my burden for relief ;
Ask me no questions—wherefore break
The wave of grief ?

Or sleeps she by the seething sea,
Or in some lonely grass-grown spot,
Or is she only dead to me,
It matters not.

For there are deeper graves than lie
In shadow of the cypress gloom,
And darker partings than the sigh
Breathed at the tomb.

Out of my path !—Is there not space
For hearts that bear a funeral load
To travel at their own sad pace
Along life's road ?

Let me go where my light is flown,
Let me go where my smile is fled ;
Let me go on my way alone,
I and my dead.

FAREWELL.

Farewell ye streams,
Your music seems
But to provoke my sorrow !
Farewell bright flowers,
In all your bowers
No solace I may borrow !

Ye birds that raise
Your matin lays,
Love's union sweetly sharing,
Little ye know
Of human woe,
Little of man's despairing.

Ye verdured plains
And sheltered lanes,
With hedgerow wildings twining,
Round every stem
Some unbought gem,
With rays unenvied shining.

Ye leafy woods
Whose solitudes
With fern and moss are bedded,
Where the coy shade
With many a braid
Of the golden sun is wedded.

Favourites all,
No more the call
Of the summer morn shall wake me,
To bid me stray
By the river-way,
Or where the mood would take me.

Old friends, farewell !
I may not tell
Where I shall be to-morrow ;
But in your bliss
Ye will not miss
The pale-browed child of sorrow.

TO AN OBSCURE WILD FLOWER.

(Whose name the author was unable to ascertain.)

They do not know thy name, sweet flower,
And yet for this I love thee more ;
There are enough in hall and bower,
Whose names are written o'er and o'er.
So there are bards in fame and power,
Familiar at the great man's door ;
While he who sings thy lot unknown
Divides the fate that is thine own.

But though, fair nursling of the storm,
Uncherished and unwept ye die,
While other flowers are sheltered warm
And warded from the wintry sky ;
And though ere long this wasted form
Wither in kindred penury,
We fall alike by His behest,
Who never vainly wrings a breast.

THE LAKE.

The river has been often sung, the fountain and the rill,
Twin-sisters of the silver tongue command the Muse's quill ;
But the broad Lake, where lilies dream their summer lives
away,
To me doth seem as fit a theme to grace a song as they.

There weary of the sultry noon the south wind comes to die ;
There till the rising of the moon the wheeling swallows fly ;
And as if envious of the bliss the mirrored heavens share,
The pouting banks bend o'er to kiss its margin unaware.

And when the swift forsakes her track, and when no sc
wind stirs
The silent Lake that mirrors back the solitary firs,
Then does some sad, congenial sense, responsive move
breast,
For in its dark magnificence methinks I love it best.

In this, too, am I as the Lake—that thoughts like swall
fly
About my breast, so apt to take the colours of the sky;
And now bright hopes like lilies sleep upon my bo
spread,
And now dark clouds of sorrow keep long vigil o'er
head.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.

Dear village church, I love it
On the holy Sabbath day,
With its ivy-covered tower,
And its beechen arbour'd way.
I love the children's singing
And the sacred organ play
In the dear old village church
On the dear old Sabbath day.

I love it in the winter
When the holly boughs are there,
And better still in summer
When the woodbine scents the air.
And thro' each diamond window
Streams many a sunny ray
In the dear old village church
On the dear old Sabbath day.

'Tis long since first I knew it,
But I yet remember how
I used to bend my little knees
And veil my little brow,
By one who loved to bring me
To kneel with her and pray
In the dear old village church
On the dear old Sabbath day.

Now there are many faces
That were not here before ;
And the snowy heads are fewer,
And the grass-grown hillocks more ;
But He remains unaltered,
Whose holy Name we say
In the dear old village church
On the dear old Sabbath day.

AUNTIE'S GRAVE.

Auntie in heaven, the other day,
When my heart was weary with sighing,
I went in the evening hour to pray
By the grave where you are lying.

In vain I scanned the tombs around,
That told of the rich and holy,
Till I found thee, as thou wert ever found,
Among the poor and the lowly.

No stone to speak, with pallid face,
A lie above thy pillow ;
No urn, where bends with courtly grace
The ceremental willow :

But softly, as by angels led,
Were winds of evening blowing ;
And lightly sprinkled o'er thy bed
A race of daisies growing.

Sweet spot ! I lingered long in prayer
And reverie beside it ;
And blessed the flowers scattered there,
That spread their leaves to hide it.

And if I could not help but weep,
'Twas with a softened sorrow,
As I thought of the gentle saint asleep,
Waiting her glorious morrow !

Dear, humble grave—strive as ye may,
Ye flowers, to wreath and bind it,
The angels, in the final day,
Will well know where to find it !

THE ROSE'S POEM.

Rose, that sing'st tenor in the quire of flow'rs,
Fair rose, swell thy blown cheek and sing me now
The story of a rose's summer day.
The woodbine shall assist with slender throat,
The lily with her silver lip thy tale,
And when thou tir'st the gentle violet
An interlude of sweetness shall distil.
Nay, art thou mute ?—Then let me sing for thee !
A south wind wakened thee, what time the Morn
Lifted her white bust from the foamy sea,
And dropt that golden hair in whose bright strands
The waves with tangling fingers love to play ;
Landward she moved, bride-like, with misty eyes—

Nor came she unattended, for the sun
Flung his red reins upon the dawn's sleek neck,
And handed her along the wat'ry floor.
The young brooks ran to her, and as they ran
Fingered their pebbly stops, kissing for joy
The blue eyes of their margin flow'rs ; the lark,
Fearful that he had overslept the dawn,
Sprang heav'nward, and warbled as he flew,
A clue of song to link him to his cot.
Leave we the sultry noon, what time thy breast
Defenceless trembled 'neath th' o'erweening bee,
For other hearts beside the rose's lose
Their honey ere their prime—the sweetest first.
Came Eve, and in the western main the sun
His crimson forehead plunged—then the plashed clouds
Shone o'er with peaks of flame together knit
By lakes of ruby sheen, nor did there lack
Fountains of amethyst and rivulets
Of amber strewn with paler primrose ray ;
Anon, his robe of glory gathered up,
Passed day's proud emperor, then fell
From the calm heav'n the twilight time of prayer,
And rose from earth the vesper of the flow'rs.
Are there who deem the breath of flowers mute,
Because their own dull ears have never heard
The respiration of a violet,
Or caught a rose's sigh ? Oh ! gentle race,
That pour your dewy vials to Him whose feet
Upon the ev'ning hills are radiant, a creed
Less stern is mine, and oft I come to pray
Among the congregation of the flowers.
There, when the day's ungenial task is done,
I love to wait the rising of the moon,
The angel of the flowers, herself a flower,
In the wide sward of heav'n ; or floating fair
As some pale lily on a tideless lake ;

Or walking as a maiden shepherdess,
Pasturing her innumerable flocks ;
Or stooping motherly with placid brow
To take the tired earth 'neath her silver wing.
It was but yesternight I saw her pace
The folds empyrean, followed by her flock,
At the dusk hour that the roses sleep :
Anon the azure gloomed, the lightning flashed,
And the loud thunder shook yon mountain tow'rs
That breast the broad horizon in their pride ;
And rocks were rent, and torrents, fiercely lashed,
Leapt from the windy steep, and the wild waves
Ran moaning on the shore ; yet was thy sleep,
Fair rose, unbroken, and thy slender stem
Secure. Such was the tenderness of One
Who moved the storm, yet, soon relenting, sent
His stars to stay the dread artillery.
Behold ! like trumpeters in panoply
Of gold they rode, caparisoned in all
The pomp of their high heraldry sublime ;
Advanced their banners, and from the champaign,
Or front of heaven, did reiterate
Their Sovereign's eternal oath, I AM.
Farewell, sweet rose ! I ever cherished thee ;
But now I hold thee sacred for this strain
By thee inspired. Farewell ! thy life is short
Like mine, so would that mine like thine was pure !

A HYMN.

We seek one port beyond the main,
We journey on one tide ;
Then, Father, let no question vain,
Thy children here divide.

The streams by various names we call,
Flow on to one bright sea ;
Thy sun of Love shines on them all—
They all flow on to Thee.

So, as upon the streams the skies
Their shade of glory throw,
Let heaven's light suffuse our eyes,
And fill our breasts below.

And when our lives like sere leaves fall,
Whatever stream it be
On which they fall, oh ! deign to call
Those withered leaves to Thee.

SNOWDROPS.

Who christened them ?
I should like to know—
Those flowers
That kiss the hem
Of the vanishing snow :

That sweetly burst
From the frozen clod,
Like sinners' tears,
When the hard heart first
Is turned to God.

Even the sound
Of their soft name
Seemeth to me
As if inwound
With a poet's fame.

Snowdrops.

Ere the Spring leaves
Dare the rude North,
Or the swallows
Build in the eaves,
They trustingly come forth.

In the bleak light
Of the winter air,
Like the faces
Pale, pure, and white
Of saints in prayer ;

Some bending low,
Some heavenward turned,
Holy teachings
From these flowers of snow
May be learned.

Winter around,
Winter above,
Yet they thaw
The frozen ground
With their love.

Then the warm sun
Their faith repays,
And crown-wreaths
Of gold are spun
From the haze.

So the cold world
Has its snowdrops, too—
Gentle souls,
Sweetly unfurled,
As if to woo

God's own bright smile
To this land of ours ;
Offerings
For others' guile—
Earth's altar flowers.

SONG OF THE SAILOR'S BRIDE.

I.

Far away is my true love,
And far away from me ;
But O ye Pow'r Supreme above
The sailor's guardian be !
When wild winds sweep the dreadful deep,
And tempest waves run free,
Remember how his vessel's prow
Has none to guide but Thee.

II.

I live where flowers bless the day,
With friends to cherish me,
While round my true love far away
Is nothing but the sea ;
Yet if Thy care attend my prayer,
Then he as safe shall be
Where storms divide the awful tide,
As here upon the lea.

III.

Perhaps a maiden's prayer is weak,
And faintly reaches Thee ;
But yet the tear upon my cheek
At least Thine eye can see.
It is for me he dares the main,
The dangers of the sea—
Oh ! bring him safely back again
To England and to me.

SONG OF THE SAILOR.

I.

Who talks of danger on the deep,
 And thinks that he can find
 A safer berth upon dry land
 Is little of my mind ;
 The hulk of life, in storm or calm,
 Or soon or late must fail,
 Then give to me the heart that's free
 To drive before the gale.
 Let us boldly brave
 The tempest and the wave,
 Content if we can do
 Our duty still,
 Through good and ill,
 Like fearless men and true.

II.

The world is but a mighty ship
 Upon a mighty tide ;
 The sun is but the compass point
 To which her courses ride ;
 And death is a man overboard
 In an unsounded sea :
 Then whether the grave be a clod or a wave
 What matters it to me ?
 Let us leave the trip
 To the Master of the ship,
 Content if we can gain
 The only port
 That's worth a thought,
 When we've finished with the main.

TEDDY'S GRAVE.

O'er Teddy's grave the storm may rave,
And bleak winds loudly blow ;
He will not hear, our Teddy dear,
He sleeps so sound below.

On Teddy's bed the grass is spread
To keep our Teddy warm ;
A daisy lies on Teddy's eyes
To hide them from the storm.

O'er Teddy's breast the dewdrops rest
All day like diamonds bright,
And every star keeps watch afar
O'er Teddy all the night.

When Teddy dear was with us here,
Before he made us weep,
Our mother oft with music soft
Sang Teddy dear to sleep.

But now they've spread his cradle bed
Among the churchyard flowers,
The angels ring the bells and sing
A better hymn than ours.

So frost and snow may come and go,
And winter winds may rave ;
But sound and deep shall Teddy sleep
Within his tiny grave.

TO A WILD FLOWER IN DECEMBER.

Pale flower of the waning year,
 Art thou constrained to linger here,
 Unsistered in thy late career ;
 Or is it only
 Of choice ye keep, while others sleep,
 Your vigil lonely ?

The winter boughs have long been bare,
 Their leaves dance in the windy air,
 As though old arts of spring-tide fair
 They still remember,
 And wish to try them on the sky
 Of bleak December.

And is your gentle plan as theirs,
 To charm the cold December airs ?
 Or have you tarried unawares,
 Like one who lingers
 Beside the bed of beauty fled
 With prayer-clasped fingers ?

It matters not, sweet child of grace,
 Sole relic of thy brilliant race ;
 To me thy uncomplaining face
 Speaks but one story—
 The love of Him, who lights the brim
 Of death with glory !

‘*FAN.*’

My dog ‘Fan,’
With her cold black nose,
 Match her if you can ;
In shape or in colour
There’s never another
 Like my ‘Fan.’

She’ll tell my feet
From the end of the street,
 Will my dog Fan ;
And run to meet me,
And to greet me
With her cold black nose,
 As she can.

Friends may be friends
For selfish ends—
 Shams and shows ;
Rich and grand,
Grave and bland,
They’ve never a hand
 Like the cold black nose
Of Fan.

THE UNFORTUNATE TO THE SPRING.

They tell me thou art here again,
 Spring, of the dewy face,
But I’ve no portion in thy reign,
 No stake upon thy race.

Thy very name seems strange to me,
So long is it ago
Since last I saw a forest tree
Or heard a brooklet's flow.

The tall woods are thy corridors,
Thy guests the shining hours,
The south winds thy ambassadors,
Charged with the breath of flowers.

Only the city streets are mine,
Only the city's din,
Only the false dead flowers I twine
To glitter in my sin.

GONE.

Gone! It was in the early spring, while yet the frosty rime
Forbade the sweet wild flowers to bring new thoughts of
summer time,
While yet the churchyard grass was bare of the little daisy face,
Whose upturned glance of hope makes there its earliest
dwelling-place.

Perhaps the Hand that beckoned her tenderly thought it best
To spare the sorrow it would stir in such a gentle breast,
If when she bade the world good-bye a mute entreaty fell
From each fair flower whose dew-wet eye reproached the
sad farewell.

Gone! and the fragrant May flow'rs shed their odours by the
way ;
Gone! and the brook still runneth red in the summer's golden
ray ;
The autumn tints are painted just as in her time they were ;
And the frost-rime still with diamond dust begems the dark
browed fir.

Gone! yet had ye but seen her hair blown rippling in the
breeze,
And the white forehead shining there, parting its wavy seas
Like the prow of a vessel heaven-bound no thing of earth
might stay,
Ye would not wonder she had found her wings and flown
away.

THE WAVE AND THE SHELL.

I stood on the shore when a wave of the ocean
Enchanted my soul with its murmuring spell,
And I fancied it whispered some beautiful notion
Into the ear of a pearl-lined shell.
So soon when the wave by its fellows was driven
To follow its track on the desolate sea,
I lifted the shell, and the whisper was given
By the faithless and passionless thing to me.

Then I thought of a youth who had loved a maiden,
And breathed out his soul in her yielding ear;
And I saw him banished from hope's bright aiden,
And forced on a turbid and wild career.
And I wondered whether another had ever
Gathered his secret, Elise, from thy breast,
And whether the winds of fate that sever
The wave and the shell shall be ever at rest.

AN APRIL SONG.

Sweet April's gentle breast finds room for half the sheep of
Flora's fold:
She buys them from a frosty doom with many a bribe of
sunny gold,

And though some blame her for her tears, yet I have often
thought the show'rs
Were offerings shed upon the biers of bright and early-
perished flowers.

She tempts the feathery songsters home from milder shores
beyond the main,
She bids the soft Spring breezes roam with odorous burdens
o'er the plain,
And forth from out each darkened cell recalls the blithe
and bright-winged throng
To ripple those air-seas that swell the vast empyrean shores
along.

'Tis now that Nature's schooling hand displays her simplest
alphabet
By grove and glade, through all the land, so that the dullest
heart may get
Even from lisplings incomplete, those lessons of our Father's
love,
Syllabled in the young lamb's bleat and the nesting call of
the turtledove.

The blue anemone doth brave rude zephyr on the mountain-side,
And the wild wallflower's pennons wave aloft in many-
coloured pride,
And crowfoot in the underwood, and speedwell by the hedge-
row gay
Wake, with their fair-eyed sisterhood, to kiss the April rains
away.

The hyacinth, like a bashful maid—still sweetest when she is
most coy—
In the retirement of the shade her virgin sweetness doth employ;
Forget-me-not bends o'er the brook whose banks the golden
cowslips line,
And in its unambitious nook flowers the little celandine.

The house-sparrow buildeth in the eaves, the white-throat
and the willow-bird
From belfries in the curling leaves make their rejoicing
matins heard,
While songs that chime to olden tunes encounter us from
every spray,
Waking forgotten rhymes and runes, each speaking of some
bygone day.

And so I love thee, April, well ! love thee for nurturing with
tears
Those meek evangels of the dell that whisper of serener
spheres,
And all the new and bright array of leaves that with their
thousand forms
Clothe the wood-warriors tall and gray—the veterans of un-
counted storms.

I love thee that thou seem'st to be so like this fitful life of
ours,
Like it in thy uncertainty—the frost-dews mingling with the
flowers—
Nor like it less calm hopes suggest in the sweet end thy
labours know,
When, with the passionate winds at rest, we leave thee where
thy violets blow.

THE POET.

Darkling toil the scholiast sages,
Lost like moles among their lore—
Independent of the ages
Comes the poet's sudden store,
Shed upon him from the portals
Where the sentinel immortals
The vials of genius pour.

Yet often is his flight confined
By poverty that cramps his wing,
And oft his light to some dim niche consigned,
As if, like us, th' ungentle fates would blind
The bird they train to sing.

But why with other fates unkind
Dost thou, oh, Death ! conspire
T' abridge the poet's hour,
And bind
The cypress round his lyre ?

Is it that he does thee wrong,
And thou wreak'st on him thy might,
Jealous of thy ancient right,
Jealous that thy vaunted power
Should be bearded by his song ?

Yet take his life—thou canst no more ;
His loss though we deplore,
Still sacred from all shafts of thine
Is the proud music of his deathless line.

So we will look with gentle eyes
When for himself he is unwise,
For his thoughts are thoughts of beauty,
Though his days are days of care,
And his dreams are dreams of duty,
And his life a life of prayer.

Here his fancies round him travel,
Shadowed by his dim career,
But the future shall unravel
All the dark threads woven here.

Then like stars around their centre
Shall his proud creations run,
Ever brightening with splendour,
And the poet's soul their sun.

And nought shall dim the radiant lore
Shed upon him from the portals
Where the sentinel immortals
The vials of genius pour.

TO ELISE.

They call you his, you are mine for ever—
Mine by the law of soul for soul ;
The world is strong, but it cannot sever
Souls the Creator has linked together.
As there are stars in yonder sky,
That distant on their orbits roll
And yet depend upon each other,
So is it, Sweet, with you and I ;
Nor think the spheres that come between
The parted stars have power to smother
The fires of a sister destiny ;
The web of our fate may be woven late,
But the order of Heaven shall yet be seen,
And I am patient and can wait.

THE VALENTINE.

STAVE I.

Through February's misty shrouds
I watched the sun's first ray ;
I saw it kiss the blushing clouds,
And speed on its earthward way ;

Till, weary of its glorious race,
On a snowdrop's brow it fell,
Bright as a penitent's tear of grace,
Or the light of prayer on a sister's face,
At the sound of the convent bell.

Then sprang the lark, like a shaft of song,
Up to the far blue sky,
The heavens trembled to prolong
The echoing melody ;
The daisy buds on the tall hill-crests
Peeped through their silver bars,
And from beneath their silky vests
There glanced a thousand golden breasts
That twinkled like the stars.

And, oh ! I deemed that life was sweet,
And took my hasty way,
Brushing, with love's impatient feet,
The morning rime away :
For I thought of another—you understand—
Of one I had asked to be mine ;
Of a sweet white brow, and a small white hand,
That had brought me back to my native land
To claim a Valentine.

I pictured how those soft large eyes
Would fill with tears of joy,
And how the rich deep blush would rise
As she kissed her sailor boy.
What mattered now the weary years,
And the dangers of the sea ?
We would smile at all our early fears,
As we blessed each other through our tears,
My Valentine and me.

STAVE II.

In yonder hedgerow, where the wild rose grew,
There is nought but a leafless thorn ;
And the sweetbriar, too, that ravish'd the dew,
Hangs scentless and forlorn ;
And the vanishing breath of the violet flowers,
And the kiss of the woodbine spray,
That spread a spell o'er the twilight hours,
And charmed our feet to their fragrant bowers,
Can you tell me where are they ?

The finch that would so sweetly rail
At its mate in the greenwood tree,
And the nightingale that warbled a tale
Of sorrow and love to me ;
And the turtledove, with its tender knock
Of cooing life away,
And the swallow that flew with blue-bright back
Close on the river's winding track,
Can you tell me where are they ?

Ah ! these may yet return again
In the budding days of spring ;
The soft refrain of the night-bird's strain,
And the spices the woodbines fling.
It was not them I meant, you know ;
I spoke beneath a veil :
For a gentler song is hush'd below,
And a sweeter flower is gone, I trow,
Than ever blessed the gale.

My bird has flown its nest for aye—
My flower has bloomed its last ;
It faded away like a rose from the spray,
When the withered leaves were cast.

The snow that lies on that narrow bed
Shall pass ere the summer hours ;
But the snow that gathers upon my head
Shall remain till they lay me with my dead
Beneath the churchyard flowers.

LOVE.

Dip the wings of Love in sorrow,
If you wish to keep him long ;
He would fly the world to-morrow,
Was there nought but light and song.

Earth is not his home but heaven,
And he only tarries here,
By his sister Pity driven
To beguile a mortal's tear.

'ALWAYS THE SAME.'

I've just been through your relics, John, and, searching, I
found there,
In an old letter of my own, a braid of dark brown hair.

And on the letter was a seal, and on that seal I read,
' ALWAYS THE SAME ' round a laurel leaf, and wished that
I was dead.

'Always the same!' Oh, God, how false! and, yet, oh,
God, how true!
Always the same I was, dear John, and always false to
you.

Oh, for the damp untimely grave, and the earth on the loved
one's brow !

And oh, for the heart I threw away that may never return to
me now !

Oh, great, grave heart ! you never told the wrong that I had
done—

Only sang sometimes like a bird when darkened from the
sun ;

But I read meanings in your line the world will never see,
And by many a name that is not mine I know you spoke of
me.

The lock of brown hair that you prized I dare not throw
away,

Though it waits unchanged to mock me when its sister braids
are gray.

But on each relic of your love I count my loveless deeds
Over and over as a nun counts prayers upon her beads.

And now in either hand I twine that braid of dark brown
hair,

Whose threads should be as black as night to match the stain
they bear.

And now I read the legend on the little seal of red—

'Always the same' round a laurel leaf, and wish that I was
dead.

THE WEEPING WILLOW.

Why dost thou weep, fair willow,
 Above the dead ?
 The grass upon their pillow
 Is smoothly spread,
 Their sleep
 Is deep,
 Their cares are sped.
 Why dost thou weep, fair willow,
 Above the dead ?

They have but ceased to labour—
 Their lot is blest ;
 The lofty elm, thy neighbour,
 Stoops not his crest.
 Then why
 Are thy
 Frail boughs opprest ?
 They have but ceased to labour—
 Their lot is blest.

Yet think not I would alter
 Thy drooping guise,
 For hope is prone to falter,
 And grief is wise ;
 And life
 A strife
 The strongest tries ;
 So think not I would alter
 Thy drooping guise.

For pleasure flies to-morrow,
Perchance to-day ;
But those once friends with sorrow,
Are friends for aye.
Let joy
Decoy
The vain and gay ;
Be thine and mine sweet sorrow,
Serene for aye.

THE DEATH OF LITTLE NELL.

She spoke of music in the air, of music passing sweet,
Perhaps the escort spirits there moved their harmonious feet,
Or else the golden harps of heaven beguiled her with their
play,
That unaware the angel hands might steal her soul away.

Anon she slept ; but, waking soon, would kiss us each
again,
While a whisper lingered on the lip that fashioned it in
vain ;
And by the beating of our hearts, that were so still before,
We knew the pretty weary face would light our hearth no
more.

Then the soft blue eyes were shrouded, and the sweet white
brow grew cold,
But the sunlight faded not away from the young hairs'
rippling gold ;
And the little mouth seemed ready still to draw another
breath,
Though the singing lips were silent in the pallid halls of
death.

Her gentle playmates brought in flowers, pale flowers that suited best—

We all remembered how in life she wore them on her breast,
So there we placed them, and we crossed the small thin hands above,

And wept to see them lie so quiet on the flowers they used to love.

But now, when trail the twilight shades athwart the evening sky,

And the last ray of sunset rests on the village spire to die,
We think of that glorious life of hers, in the radiant land of day,

And bless the Power that wisely drew her stainless soul away.

THE BROOK.

Sweet brook, I love to be thy guest,
What time the noon wind wanders free,
To lie at rest beside thy breast,
Until thy whisper wakens me !

For like a bride to me thou art,
Thy voice is low, thy song is sweet,
My lonely heart forgets to smart
When thou art murmuring at my feet !

A meet companion art thou too,
For thy fleet race resembles mine ;—
Through sun and dew a wilding crew
With soft embraces round thee twine :

But soon thy course will leave the lea,
And merged in yonder turbid river
Wilt thou, like me, look back and see
Thy path of beauty gone for ever.

And newer waters from the spring
Shall fill the bed thou murmurest o'er,
And newer poets wake the string
My nerveless hand may sweep no more.

AMPTHILL PARK ON AN AUTUMN SUNDAY.

In this calm niche of Nature's ample pile,
While holy bells the holy hour beguile,
How sweetly may a wearied child of care
In meditation touch the skirts of prayer ;
And, by no tangled doctrinals perplexed,
With heav'n's high brow for an ungarbled text,
Approach, as nearly as a mortal may,
The Sabbath spirit of a Sabbath day.
For here the landscape speaks from age to age
A creed not ravel'd by pedantic rage,
But one that iterates the lore of love
As first expounded by the Scribe above.
Here spreads the forest king his boughs sublime,
Superior to the fitful pulse of time ;
And here the sere leaves, lovely in decay,
Like stars irradiate the autumnal spray,
As if the angel of the future spring
Had brushed their tresses with her golden wing.
Nor be the record absent from my line,
The footprints of the noble dead are mine :
Here dwelt the gentle queen whose fortunes cold
The plaintive muse of gentler Shakespeare told ;
Here roved the bard who touched Arcadia's springs,
And he who tuned so deftly Memory's strings.
Great spirits ! hear ye in your higher sphere
The chord of stranger music sounded here ?
It may be so, for 'tis the poet's bliss
To knit the woof of that bright world to this,

And link with every thread of golden song
Some wandering mortal to the angel throng !
Sweet day, sweet place, high thoughts within me swell
At each vibration of yon evening bell !
The Sabbath spirit stirs within me now—
I pant to tread the heav'nly mountain brow ;
My soul, reminded of her native clime,
No longer tamely wears the thralls of time ;
No longer slumbers in the senses' sty,
But lifts her mortal raiment to the sky,
And beats with tireless wing the muses' flame
That burns in Heaven and in earth the same.

UNWRITTEN THOUGHTS.

The bard is conscious of a sense
Beyond the written thought ;
There are conceptions too intense
In language to be wrought.
The eye that roves from star to star
Some limit yet must find ;
And stars the poet's fancies are—
His language these may bind,
But those may only light afar
The heaven of his mind.

THE CHOICE.

- ‘ Gather me a flower, budding into bloom,
Let it be a wild one, with a sweet perfume.
- ‘ No rare garden beauty, grown with art and care,
But a simple blossom, smiling anywhere :

- ' One of Nature's freeborn and untutored things,
Treasured of the poet in his wanderings :
- ' One of God's evangels preaching by the way,
Of His love and wisdom, all the livelong day.'
- ' Say which shall I bring you ; there are many here :
Which among the many do you hold most dear ?
- ' There's the gentle " speedwell," if its name speak true
Asking our welfare all the long day through ;
- ' There's the yellow king-cup like a vase of gold,
Sprung of some bright treasure, buried deep of old ;
- ' And the frail wood-lily, like an angel-child,
For its pale purity in a world defiled ;
- ' There's the ever-pleading, fond forget-me-not,
Calling to the river from her grassy cot—
- ' Bidding it remember, when with *other* flowers,
That blue eyes are watching in its native bowers.
- ' There's the brave old daisy, pioneer of all,
The first in the battle, and the last to fall ;
- ' And the little violet, such a tiny thing !
Hardly worth the trouble it would cost to bring.'
- ' Stay,—that is the flower I love best of all,
For it has the dower of a soul withal ; —
- ' A soul that makes the shade scarcely regret the sun,
So sweet its odour is—oh, bring me, bring me one !'

THE RIVER.

Oh ! I love to wander
 By the river,
 And quietly ponder
 By the river,
 With the green leaves overhead,
 With the grass beneath my tread,
 While the summer winds are shed,
 Beside the river.

Beautiful are the flowers
 By the river,
 And peaceful are the hours
 By the river ;
 Winding far as though it sought
 Calm nooks suiting tender thought,
 With a silent solace fraught,—
 I love the river.

For bright are my fancies
 By the river,
 In my day-time trances
 By the river ;
 Dreams of higher, holier things,
 Heaven-sent imaginings,
 Visit me on zephyr'd wings,
 By the still river.

With dear ones I have trod
 By the river,
 On the dew-nurtured sod
 By the river ;

Passed upon life's stream are they,
As the leaf is borne away,
Whither, whither, who shall say?
Adown the river.

So I love to wander
By the river,
And dreamily ponder
By the river ;
Amid wildings pure and fair,
And things innocent of care,
While the soft and breezy air
Blows from the river.

Blithest are the bird songs
By the river,
And the lowing herd throngs
By the river ;
The verdured banks caress thee,
The lips of flowers press thee,
And every sound doth bless thee,
Thou happy river !

But the breezes quicken
By the river,
And night shadows thicken
By the river ;
Onward, onward to thy goal,
Spurning earth, and earth's control—
Type of our yearning soul—
Unresting river !

THE NIGHTINGALE.

What taught thee, gentle bird of eve,
 That melancholy tone,
 And moved thy pensive heart to grieve
 In strains so like my own—
 So like my own, except in this,
 That thou canst ever sing,
 While mine may seldom be the bliss
 To sweep the soothing string ?

Did some light beauty spurn thy prayer
 And meet thy love with scorn,
 Consigning thee to linger there
 Forsaken and forlorn ?
 If so, sweet bird, I have a heart
 To feel thy utmost woe,
 For I have known the tender smart,
 And still, alas ! must know.

Oh ! would that I, like thee, might quit
 The uncongenial throng,
 And in sequestered covert knit
 My sorrows up in song ;
 Like thee, above the rose's bed
 All sterner needs forget,
 And fringe with memory's golden thread
 The mantle of regret.

Sweet bird, farewell ! as dies thy note
 Upon the south wind's breath ;
 So on the evening shadows float
 My soul away in death.
 As clings thy music to the air,
 Unwilling still to cease,
 So may my memory linger where
 Kind hearts will give it peace.

SAPPHO'S LAST SONG.

- ‘ One sigh for life, one song for love,
 One thought of things I would not tell,
 One vesper to the blue above,
 And then, cold world, farewell, farewell !
- ‘ The dull rude band of earthlier mould
 Shall dream in vain how Sappho died ;
 Their grave-rites never shall behold
 The brow that rapture beautified.
- ‘ Yon seamstress moon herself shall sew
 With silver threads *my* ocean shroud ;
 The billowy waves in ebb and flow
 Shall chant my funeral dirge aloud.
- ‘ And on the far eternal steep
 The watchers of the blue night sky
 Shall bid the spirit-sisters keep
 A place for the child of minstrelsy.
- ‘ Yet still in death I would not part
 With thee, my sweet consoling lyre,
 Thou’st been the life-blood of this heart,
 The only friend I could not tire.
- ‘ When those most loved were most unkind,
 And those most trusted most untrue,
 Thou told’st it to the answering wind—
 ’Twas all thy gentle art could do.

' So thou shalt share my maiden rest
Among the coral groves below,
Prest to pale Sappho's weary breast,
Where the green waving seaweeds grow.'

She ceased, and Sappho's harp no more
Awoke the rough Leucadian shore ;
And the winds were hushed as they took their way
Where the sorrowful smile of the moonlight lay.

A WITHERED FLOWER.

There was a flower in my heart,
A wind of fate its brightness swept ;
But still the spot is set apart,
And where it bloomed its grave is kept.

In truth, I loved that flower so,
I would not change its withered leaves
For all the other flowers below
That Hope into her garland weaves.

However lovely others are,
However bright in beauty's pride,
Its broken stem is dearer far
Than every bloom of life beside.

Ambition's pathway these may keep,
Of fame and fortune those may rave,
But it is mine to sit and weep
For ever by a dead love's grave.

‘GAY!’

How long have you been gay, my girl ?

How long since first the fears
Of conscience learnt to follow,
With laughter false and hollow,
Those thoughts that threaten tears ?

‘ A short life and a merry one ! ’

But is it as you say ?
Is it indeed so very,
So very, very merry,
So very, very gay ?

Do you not still remember
Your girlhood’s purer time,
The sweet bells ringing,
The footstep springing
Obedient to their chime ?

And when the gauds of folly
Are twisted in your hair,
Can memory smother
The thought of the mother
Who busied her fingers there ?

Nay, answer me not with a jest ;
In vain all proud disguise,
For the waves of emotion
That sweep the heart’s ocean
Are leaping to your eyes.

Yet think not I reproach you,
Nor blame the earnest line
In sorrow spoken
To that broken
Deserted heart of thine.

Poor heart ! how lone and ruined
Its ghastly echoes say,
As through each rafter
Rings the laughter
So desolately 'gay.'

CLOUDS.

All robed in light,
Serenely bright,
They clothe the maiden morning ;
Her path they strew
With pearls of dew,
Her feet with mists adorning.

Anon they droop
Where eve doth stoop
Beneath their amber fountains,
And cool her sleep,
So calm and deep,
Among the western mountains.

And now they form
The column of storm,
And now, their ranks enlarging,
They fiercely sweep
The hurricane steep,
Through night and thunder charging.

Of such a shade
Our lives are made,
Now with the love-light glowing,
Now shattered by
The shafts that fly
Where winds of death are blowing.

ESTHER MAY.

Esther May, the neighbours say,
Was once the pride of Brentford town,
Though now upon her brow the gray
Is mingled with the brown.

Esther May, when young and gay,
Was not so wise as a maid should be ;
But wandered from her home away
With a sailor of the sea.

Esther May came back again—
She had no place beside to go—
And soon a tender babe was lain
Where early daisies grow.

Esther May is wont to rave,
And her wild strange eyes are sad to see ;
But she knows the place of a little grave
Beneath the churchyard tree.

LIGHT AND SHADE.

The nightingale sings to the rose in the shade,
And the lark to his mate carols loud from the sky,
But the light and the shadow together I braid,
As I sing of the rapture of hours gone by.

Far now are those dark eyes that ravished my heart—
Ah! to me they were heaven's own portal, Elise —
And I dreamt in my folly that heaven was part
Of the lot that might fall to a mortal, Elise.

So this is the shadow that clings to my song,
That on earth I must sigh to behold them in vain ;
And this is its light that—though parted so long
The grave may yet bring us together again.

Thus, hoping and grieving take turns at my lyre,
Till I scarce know life's joy from its sorrow, Elise ;
But to-day, though I drudge in the soul-staining mire,
I may meet you in heaven to-morrow, Elise.

CAROLINE.

• We've planted flowers round your tomb,
Caroline, Caroline ;
We love to go and watch them bloom,
And think of Caroline.

Your stay was very short with us,
Caroline, Caroline ;
So o'er you the convolvulus
Dies daily, Caroline.

Your loveliness was passing sweet,
Caroline, Caroline ;
So there are roses at your feet,
Beautiful Caroline.

Yet were you fairer still when dead,
Caroline, Caroline ;
So there are lilies at your head,
Our sainted Caroline.

'Tis fit such flowers should here find place,
Caroline, Caroline ;
They are the loveliest of their race,
And so was Caroline.

DYING FOR LOVE.

A breeze met my love by the way,
And kissed her beautiful eyes ;
But before the close of the day
It had spent its being in sighs.

My love trod in the fields of May
On a violet of morning sweet,
And it breathed its life away,
To follow her beautiful feet.

Am I not fonder than they,
And you ask me why I pine ?
Would you have me live for a day
If I may not call her mine ?

THE CHRYSALIS.

A chrysalis inspires my line,
Behold its web, whose fit design
Bespeaks an influence divine.
Secure behind that texture thin,
The frail mechanic sleeps within,

A sleep but one remove from death,
Without a pulse, without a breath.

I need not of that Wisdom speak

That taught the little builder's skill

We know it was no chance nor freak

Inspired the art and moved the will.

A pupil in the self-same school

That gave the earth her annual rule,

Its slight material hoarded well,

The neatness of its finished cell,

The first and last it ever made,

Attest how well it learnt its trade.

But there's another moral here,

Of application high and clear,

As least to such as love to glean

From Nature's works, however mean,

Those lessons that oft prosper more

Than all the range of man's proud lore.

When day by day and hour by hour

It wove the woof that hid the sun,

When day by day and hour by hour

From its own lip a shroud was spun ;

When toiling at its funeral loom,

Within a voluntary tomb,

About its breast, around its head,

Beneath its feet that shroud was spread,

Surely some instinct must have told

Of its future glory in purple and gold,

And a bright abode in the realms of air,

And the joys of love awaiting it there.

Yet had its trust been weak as thine,

Whose hand inscribes the musing line,

It had not been so prompt to brave

The brief oblivion of the grave ;

But rather viewed its fate with dread,

Nor rightly spent that fragile thread,

Whose skilful use has proved a shield
From every danger of the field.
And blinder than this emblem worm,
Shall I still shun life's closing term ?
I, whose proud soul gives back the lie
If I suggest her fires can die ?
Or shall I purposeless expend
Time's thread that soon shall find an end,
Unmindful still that day by day,
I, like this inch of kindred clay,
Am weaving at life's funeral loom,
The woof that soon must be my tomb ?
No, insect friend, I thank thee, no !
Though yet of apprehension slow,
I feel thy wondrous change was given
In type of ours from earth to heaven.
Thy metamorphosis foreshows
What mine shall be at life's dull close :
Like thee designed for some short date,
To labour forth a loftier fate,
Soon from the shroud my soul shall rise
With wings to cleave unbounded skies.
Her fettered pinions even here
Are pluming for their bright career ;
Within this clay I feel them furled
In fashion of that glorious world,
Where, prone on her eternal flight
High through the central groves of light,
Each breath of the cumberless spirit shall be
(As the glance of thy sun-god unto thee)
A ray from the brow of her deity.

LINES ON LEAVING ASPLEY GUISE.

Farewell, fair village, circled round
 By woodland hills and pastures green !
 A stranger in your groves has found
 A few calm hours and thoughts serene.
 May those who in your precincts dwell
 Find more than he who says farewell.

Pursuit of pleasure fleet and vain
 Have I abandoned long ago ;
 Yet might I hope for joy again,
 There is no other spot I know
 Where I could well be more content
 To pitch awhile my wandering tent.

For sheltered in your genial glades
 The season's earliest violets spring !
 The birds in your sequestered shades
 Their love-time lyrics earliest sing !
 And lilies of the valley make
 The sluggard summer fain to wake.

And in your woods, when fate is rude,
 Are paths where weary hearts may turn,
 And dells where gentle winds intrude,
 And mossy hollows fringed with fern,
 And shades where not a whisper stirs
 The silence of the sombre firs.

Nor these alone, for beauty, too,
 Endues your vales with rarer worth,
 As if entirely to renew
 The Eden season of our earth.
 Oh, lovely eyes ! Oh, lovely eyes !
 What heart can see them and be wise ?

All other joys are dead unless
Enlivened by their brilliant ray !
Scarce Heaven itself has power to bless
The heart when they are turned away.
The sweetest scenes the world can own
Are void to him who walks alone.

Farewell ! it may be short or long ;
My fate is very dim as yet ;
But I have touched a chord of song
Because I would not soon forget
The hamlet bright with radiant eyes,
The tranquil glades of Aspley Guise !

WILD FLOWERS.

Born with the morning,
Clothing, adorning
Hillside and riverside,
Hedgerow, valley and glade ;
Glad with the glad,
Sad with the sad,
Red in the full noontide,
And pale in the twilight shade.

Such are the flowers,
The fair wild flowers ;
Those whisperers of Heaven,
Ambassadors of love ;
Leaves of ' Our Father's ' book,
Whereon weary eyes may look,
To read of sin forgiven,
And a brighter world above.

Wild Flowers.

For when His angel's hand,
Forth from the Eden land
Drove with the flaming sword
The parents of our race,
He gave them flowers,
That through unborn hours
Should serve for a record
Of that glorious place.

That every morrow,
With its share of sorrow,
Should wear a bright token
That He loved them still ;
And through the ages,
Their celestial pages
In succession never broken,
Their ministry fulfil.

So, scarcely revealing,
Scarcely concealing,
Their being's sweet mystery,
They smile up from the sod ;
While on each leaf
Is written a brief
But beautiful history,
Proclaiming the care of God.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC.

I.

Christmas Music ! welcome still
To earth's tired travellers are thy strains ;
E'en from the buried years a thrill
Of melody remains ;
The echo of refrains

Whose recollection even now
Calls an old radiance to my brow,
Long haunted by a ghostly race
Of weird regrets, that ceaseless pace,
With unrelenting, grim unrest,
The empty chambers of my breast ;
 Whose darkened solitude
Thou bid'st its once dear tenants use
Again, and therefore weaves my muse
 Her lay of gratitude.

II.

Christmas Chimes ! in them how sweet
The shapes that live, the thoughts that flow ;
The pulses of old loves that beat,
 And set the soul a-glow ;
 The moving to and fro
Of spirit forms, with angel mien,
Us and our meaner selves between ;
The gentle waking of a past,
Long into slumber cast ;
And all the bright and God-sent throng
Of soul-dreams breaking into song,
 For rapturous excess ;
Because the dull heart's common bounds
Are all too narrow where such sounds
 Touch its deep tenderness.

III.

Christmas Songs ! we fain would tell
Who gifted *thee* with magic power
To bid a whole life's memories dwell
 Within one little hour—
 One sweet, though short-lived flower
Upon the weary track of Time ;
One star, that from a purer clime,

Softly to sorrow's listening ear
 Speaks of the dawning near ;
 Whispering, fondly, that again
 Over life's sin-beclouded plain—
 No dim futurity,
 But certain hope—that light shall glow
 With which we heard ye long ago,
 In childhood's purity.

IV.

Christmas Hymns ! the organ-notes
 That chariot *them* should peal sublime—
 On each reverberation floats
 More than mere words of time.
 Up let the anthem climb,
 Until it thunders at the gate
 Of Heaven, while we, His servants, wait
 His coming. Hush ! Move not the air—
 Is not His Presence there ?
 It is—it is ! Bend low your heads,
 While He upon His children sheds
 His Son's Fraternity.
 Then let the old cathedral pile
 Shake with hosannahs that shall rise
 High above yon star-towered skies,
 And tread the vast, unmeasured aisle
 Of God's eternity.

TWO 'IFS.'

If we could live as flowers do,
 In bowers where the sun stole through
 In slender threads at morn and even,
 To knit our little beds to heaven ;

Our daily study but to grow
Still further from the earth below,
And nearer, nearer in our love
To the more radiant fields above ;

With eyes for ever settled there,
With lips that fed on summer air,
Content, with never-straying feet,
To make one spot of earth more sweet ;

With never anger in our breath,
Peaceful in life, serene in death,—
How doubly blest our lives would be,
Sweet flowers ! could we live like thee.

If we could die as flowers die,
Without a pang, without a sigh,
Just close our eyes when skies grew gray,
And droop and fade and steal away ;

Then might the meek and injured maid
Seek some remote congenial shade,
Fold her pale hands awhile in prayer,
And like a rose exhale in air.

Then might the poet, on whose string
Dead hopes and joys are lingering,
Give one last vesper to the eve,
And cease to sing and cease to grieve.

When friendships fail, and hearts betray,
And life's sere leaves bestrew our way,
Ah ! which of us from death would fly,
If we could die as flowers die ?

THE MARCH OF THE PUCELLE.

There rose a maid whom kings obeyed,
 She doffed the robes that damsels wear ;
 With plume and blade, in steel arrayed,
 The helmet binds her braided hair.
Ave Maria !

It is a sight where squire and knight
 Are mustering at battle speed,
 And it is rare to see how fair
 The maiden sits her vaulting steed.
Ave Maria !

The night is calm, the air is balm,
 The priest has blessed the gathered band,
 The monks intone the Virgin's psalm—
 They go to free their sunny land.
Ave Maria !

With holy swell the vesper bell,
 Along the valley slowly borne,
 Follows them with its sweet farewell
 Over the golden fields of corn.
Ave Maria !

From rank to rank on either flank
 Rolls the swell of the soldier's hymn,
 Its cadence marked by the martial clank
 Of lance, and sabre, and saddle-rim.
Ave Maria !

A banner bright, all woven white
With lilies in the convent cell,
Towers aloft in the pale moonlight,
Where moves the maiden of Pucelle.
Ave Maria !

The trumpet rings, the charger springs—
No need to urge with spur or rein—
He seems to know the scent of a foe,
And neighs defiance across the plain.
Ave Maria !

They near the camp, they hear the tramp
Of the foeman's vigilant sentinel,
In proud career the foe appear,
They scorn the Maiden of Pucelle.
Ave Maria !

The sun may glance on helm and lance,
It does but mock their brave array,
The wind shall wave their turf-grown grave
Before the morrow of the fray.
Ave Maria !

And some shall strew the bier with rue,
And some with kindling eye shall tell
How Talbot fell, and Fastolffe flew
Before the banner of Pucelle.
Ave Maria !

PRAYER TIME.

Fold your hands, dear children,
 Fold them upon each breast,
 As the shadows of eve are folded,
 Prayerfully, in the west ;
 For the angels sent from heaven,
 To close the gates of day,
 Are waiting to carry back to God
 What His little children say.

The silver moon is walking
 Her placid way on high,
 And the diamond stars are shining
 Up in the blue night sky ;
 And the birds you love are sleeping
 On every forest spray ;
 So fold your hands, dear children,
 And let us kneel and pray.

Silence and peace, like a curtain,
 Surround all gentle things ;
 And over your garden flowers
 The shadows have spread their wings ;
 And the evening chimes are ringing
 From the belfry, old and gray ;
 So fold your hands, dear children,
 It is the time to pray.

The time that children ever
 Have offered prayer and hymn,
 In the calm and holy twilight,
 To the glorious name of Him

Who, when on earth He journeyed,
Called children by the way,
And said that the kingdom of heaven
Was made of such as they.

So fold your hands, dear children,
Fold them upon each breast,
For the shadows of eve are folded,
Prayerfully, in the west ;
And the angels sent from heaven,
To close the gates of day,
Are waiting to carry back to God
What His little children say.

VANQUISHED.

In the battle of life, mid the fallen and flying,
I sink vanquished and weary to rest ;
But true to my colours you'll find me in dying,
With the flag of the muse at my breast.

The hopes that I marshalled so proudly are shattered
In the shock of the world's fierce strife ;
The dreams that were nearest my soul are all scattered
In the rout of the battle of life.

So lay me down low where yon sentinel towers
Watch the graves with the moss o'ergrown ;
And mingle a sigh with the breath of the flowers
At the foot of my funeral stone.

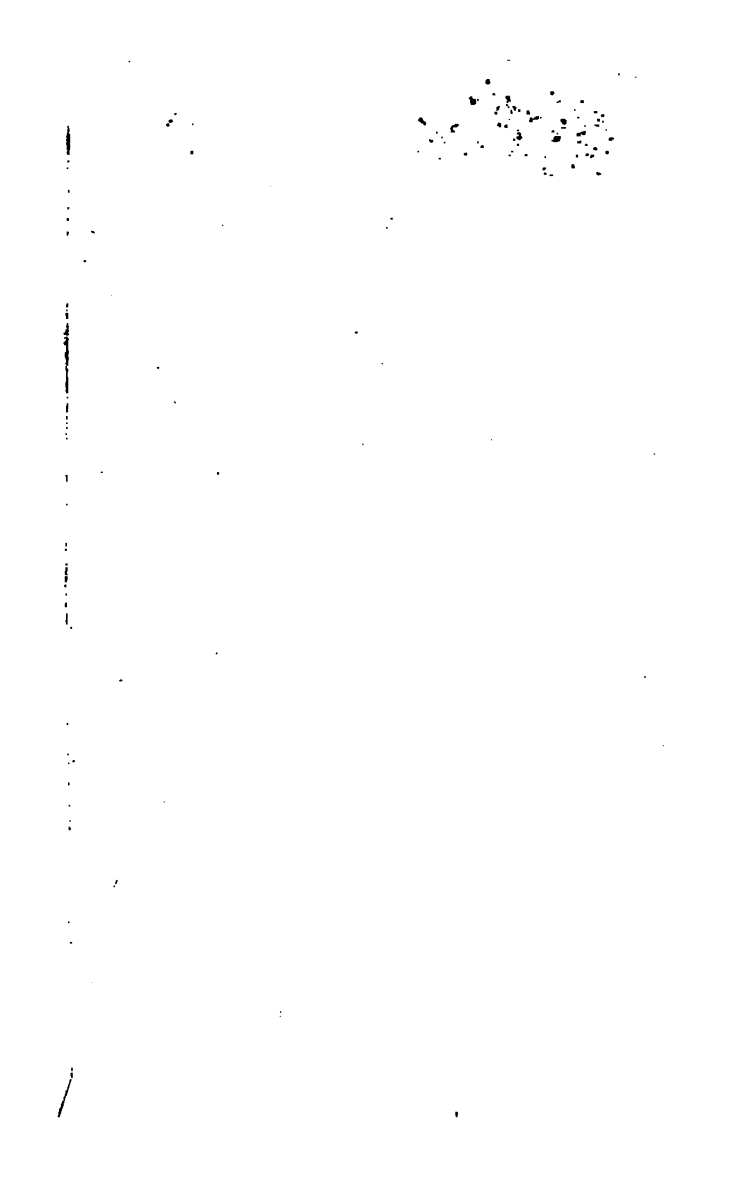
THE LANTERN BEARER.

Born to a brief and strange career,
Behold the child of grief and song,
Who, as befits the pioneer,
Walks singly from the throng.

Wherever in his path he finds
A flower, he sings of it to you,
And from his coil of life unwinds
The lovely and the true.

But envy not his brilliant lays,
The muse is like the lantern-shine,
The bearer walks in gloom, the rays
That light the heart are thine.

6



the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are undernourished has increased from 600 million to 800 million (FAO 1996).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. First, the world population has increased from 5 billion in 1987 to 6 billion in 1996, and is projected to reach 7 billion by 2015 (UNEP 1996). Second, the world population is becoming increasingly urbanized, and this has led to a greater demand for food. Third, the world population is becoming increasingly aged, and this has led to a greater demand for food. Fourth, the world population is becoming increasingly mobile, and this has led to a greater demand for food.

There are a number of ways in which the world can meet the increased demand for food. First, the world can increase the production of food. This can be done by increasing the area of land used for agriculture, by increasing the productivity of agriculture, or by both. Second, the world can reduce the waste of food. This can be done by reducing the amount of food that is lost during production, by reducing the amount of food that is lost during distribution, or by both.

There are a number of ways in which the world can reduce the waste of food. First, the world can reduce the amount of food that is lost during production. This can be done by using better farming practices, by using better storage facilities, or by both. Second, the world can reduce the amount of food that is lost during distribution. This can be done by using better transport facilities, by using better storage facilities, or by both.

There are a number of ways in which the world can increase the production of food. First, the world can increase the area of land used for agriculture. This can be done by reforestation, by afforestation, or by both. Second, the world can increase the productivity of agriculture. This can be done by using better farming practices, by using better storage facilities, or by both.

There are a number of ways in which the world can increase the productivity of agriculture. First, the world can use better farming practices. This can be done by using better seeds, by using better fertilizers, or by both. Second, the world can use better storage facilities. This can be done by using better storage facilities, or by both.

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